

Stories of Adventures In Love

Saving Tom's Money

By Elsie Endicott



ADLUTE PURDY has been a candidate for Tom's wife's favor. So had the sheriff of the county, a rich mine owner, and several other people of prominence. For Kate Lawrence was as pretty as a peach with a soft loveliness of curved cheek and flowing lines that were as a magnet to the eye masculine.

For six weeks they had been husband and wife as well as lovers. Only one cloud had been on the horizon of their happiness. The roses no longer brushed their bloom on her soft cheeks. She moved languidly instead of with the light, free tread of other years. The doctors said she had been working too hard in the schoolroom and needed a change. That Tom had better take her to California across the mountains where she could be all day and night beneath the blue roof of the continent.

"The doctor knows best. If it's an outdoor life you need, that's what you'll get, Katie, my lass. I'll buy that camp outfit from Maddox and we'll cross the mountains by wagon. 'Twill set you right for sure."

"But what will we do with the money, Tom?"

The young Irish-American was a miser. Six months before he had taken a lease on the Nancy K and had struck pay ore. Before the lease was ended he had cleaned up nine thousand dollars. They had their dream of a little orange grove in southern California and both of them knew that this was the time to buy while prices were down. Wherefore they must have their money where they could get it at. A bank draft would not do because all over the country banks were paying in scrip. By good luck and industry he had won a "stake" and he intended to keep it within reach until that dream of an orange orchard became a reality.

"We'll take it with us," Tom answered.

Kate opened her eyes wide. "With us in the wagon? Will it be safe?"

"It will, for nobody will know of it. 'Take it all!'"

"Every cent of it?"

"Where?"

He whispered in her ear. She laughed and nodded. "All right, Tom."

Within an hour she was cutting out and sewing on the machine canvas bags of long narrow shape.

Tom bought the Maddox camping outfit complete, sold for a song the household furniture, and closed up his business affairs. Late that same night he and his wife drew their money from

the bank where it was deposited. Their method of doing this might have struck the casual observer as criminal. First they pulled down every blind in the kitchen and locked the doors. Cautiously Tom dragged back the linoleum and removed a short plank that had fitted from joist to joist. With his hand he scraped aside loose dirt and pulled up a tin box. This he unlocked, threw back the lid, and disclosed a heap of shining yellow double eagles, hundreds upon hundreds of them.

These they put one at a time into the long, narrow bags which were just big enough to hold fifty when carefully packed one on top of another. Kate sewed up the bags as soon as they were filled and Tom dropped them through the bung hole into an empty water barrel. When the bank was empty, Tom carried the water barrel outside and attached it to its place beside the wagon, after which he filled it from another barrel in the yard. This done, he returned to the house and slept till morning.

It was still early when they started from Goldbanks across the desert. Both of them were pleased as Punch over their new wheeled home. It was the most complete and convenient thing of the kind they had ever seen. Everything had a place, from the rifle which hung suspended from a rack in the wagon within reach of Tom's hand, to the cooking cabinet that swung snugly into place above the folding table.

"We'll be ever so happy," sighed Kate with deep content.

She was glad to be leaving, for she longed for green and growing things and moreover had lived in a continual fear that her husband would be killed in the mine. Tom let his big brown hand squeeze her little one. He was an alert and pleasant-looking fellow of five and twenty. "We will that, please God."

They traveled only twenty-five miles that day, for it was their intention to take it easy so that Kate might not get tired. At four o'clock Tom made camp. He set up the little tent and built a fire. While his wife made supper he watered the horses, and unpacked the bedding from the wagon. After they had eaten he built up the camp-fire again, and together they sat in front of its leaping flames and watched the purple mountains grow into a black wall, with a jagged top reaching into the sky of stars. For the first time in her life Kate fell asleep to the sound of the wind flapping the walls of the tent.

When she awoke she was amazed to see the sun peering at her over a saddle between two hills. Tom, busy making biscuits, called to her cheer-

fully. "Buenos dias, senora. When you are through dressing come and get it." Kate ate with a ravenous appetite that surprised her. Already the tonic of the outdoors was getting into her blood.

Lelaurely they traveled toward the mountains, for they were in no hurry to reach their destination. And day by day Tom saw the roses come back into the cheeks of his wife. Over precipitous mountain roads they swung, sometimes at a dizzy height above the canon bed below, working round the great peaks and over the passes that lay between.

Sometimes they would go for long walks together, he with his gun and she perhaps with a fishing rod. He taught her how to shoot, to ride, to enjoy the simple camp life. Or it might be that in their walks, rifle and rod would be left in the wagon and a camera taken. Once, far up in the mountains, they left the outfit near a friendly ranch house for two days while they tramped to Lost Lakes and fished. There was nothing in the wagon these whole-hearted mountain people would take, and as for what was in the water barrel it was as safe and as well hidden as if it had been in a city safety deposit vault.

So they thought. Nor did anything occur to change their opinion during the first two weeks of their journey. They were well across the divide, drawing down toward one of California's famous scenic valleys, when that occurred which brought the steel into Tom's sunny blue eyes. At Walley's Hump they had stopped to camp for a week. The fishing was good and Tom's rifle secured them plenty of grouse and quail. Returning together to the wagon about dusk one evening, they came on a man prowling about the camp. He was at the tail of the wagon examining the cooking box and its contents.

"Nothing doing here, Bill," he growled.

Tom, rifle in hand, strode up and looked at the fellow frostily. The man was Lute Purdy, the never-do-well mucker from the Goldbanks mines, who had been a rival of Lynch for the favor of Kate.

"Making yourself at home, Purdy, I see," Tom said quietly.

The man jumped as if he had been shot. A sudden face showed from the wagon, followed by a body in an evident hurry to descend.

Tom recognized this man as a second loose character with a reputation far from unimpeachable.

"Good afternoon, Bill. This your outfit?" Tom asked with quiet sarcasm.

"No, I—fact is we been tramping and we're hungry. Been looking for grub," Bill replied uneasily. For the owner of the wagon stood six feet in his shoes, had well-packed, supple muscles, and had won a reputation for fearlessness in a camp where there had been many reckless men.

"Funny Purdy didn't mention he had come to the grub if you are so hungry."

"I—I was just telling him," Purdy contributed.

Tom put the rifle down against the tall piece of the wagon, made up some ham sandwiches, and put them in a sack.

"This is the best we've got, boys. Now we'll say good-by," he said.

Both of them were big, hulking fellows, as ugly a pair of ruffians as one would be likely to meet. Either of them could have spared Tom twenty pounds, but they were muscle bound, and he was spry as a wildcat. There was in his steady blue eyes a moral suasion more potent than the weapon beside him. Moreover he had the law with him. They had plainly come for robbery, but they accepted sullenly his invitation to take themselves off.

"I don't know as we're in any such a mighty hurry," Purdy growled as they went. He longed to stay and fight their feud out to a finish, but he lacked the cold-steel nerve for it.

Tom did not answer, but his eye was on them till they had disappeared down the trail.

Kate came forward with a rather white face. "Oh, Tom. Do you think they know about—" She looked at the water barrel without finishing her sentence.

"No, they can't. But they know I made money and they feel sure we must have some of it with us. Folks can't travel four or five hundred miles without having money for supplies and emergencies."

"What are you going to do?" she asked, for he was already busy packing.

"Going to move in closer to the Fraser ranch tonight. No use taking chances. They are a pair of mighty safe hand-sorts, but it is better to be safe than sorry."

He did not tell her that he had seen a revolver projecting from the hip pocket of Purdy; nor did he mention that the man had been present when he drew the little fortune of gold pieces from the bank at the time of the panic. No need to frighten her with the thought that these scoundrels had followed them a hundred and fifty miles with robbery as their aim.

But always from that time on he watched for them. Not for a moment did he believe he was rid of them permanently. When he was least expecting it, the pair of prize beauties would reappear, and if they ever took him at disadvantage the scoundrels would

stick at nothing to gain their end. He pushed down the valley toward a more thickly settled country. Whenever it was possible he camped at a ranch house.

A week, and Tom began to feel easier in mind. They were nearing Fresno, the end of their long journey. Probably after all he had shaken off the men who had been following him.

They came to camp at dusk one evening close by the bank of a river. It was on the edge of the raisin-growing country. Game was beginning to get scarce, but they could hear the distant shooting of quail. The horses watered and fed. Tom and Kate took down the guns and followed the call of the birds. He was always a more eager hunter than she, and presently Kate returned to camp with the intention of starting supper.

On the edge of the little clearing by the river bank she stopped abruptly. A shadowy something was crouched at the tail of the wagon. The low murmur of voices reached her. The heart of the young woman stood still, then began to beat fast. It must be robbers after their money again. And Tom would not be back for half an hour.

She stifled the first panic in her, thinking desperately. She must hold them prisoners till Tom came back. But how? She could shoot straight enough—had killed a deer not two weeks earlier at two hundred yards. But could she shoot a man if it were necessary—and would she? Fear and excitement were fluttering in her like a caged bird. She was trembling like an aspen in the wind.

She thought of the money Tom had worked so hard to get. The tremors passed out of her. She felt her nerve and her resolution harden to iron. Noiselessly she skirted the camp ground, working closer and closer to the wagon, till she reached the cover of a large tree. Behind its trunk she took her stand and waited, tense and alert to every sound.

In the moonlight she could see two men busy in a litter of overturned boxes and scattered goods. Literally the contents of the wagon had been emptied on the ground. Even the flour had been poured from the sacks. Everything that could possibly be used as a hiding place for money had been turned topsy-turvy and ransacked.

The man doing the searching turned at last to the one sitting by the wheel with a revolver in his hand.

"It ain't here, Purdy. That's all pointed toward him. He sat down. From out of the bushes came two men. The one in front was Bill. His face was bleeding and swollen. Behind him walked Tom carrying a rifle. "Hands up till I've looked you both

had been agreed upon between her and Tom in case she ever needed his help when he was at a distance.

Then Kate spoke. Her voice, as hard as hammered iron, surprised herself. "I'll shoot the first man that moves."

There was a moment's startled silence. The barrel of her gun could be seen shining in the moonlight. One of the men spoke to the other.

"It's only a woman."

"I killed a deer the other day," Kate said quietly.

They happened to know she spoke the truth, for a rancher in the hills told them about it. A revolver is a poor weapon against a rifle. If her nerve held out she had them for the present.

"We ain't doin' any harm," one growled, his mind searching busily for a way out.

"You can explain it to Tom when he comes," she said.

"We ain't the kind to hurt a lady. You come right forward and we'll talk it over friendly, ma'am."

"I'll stay here. Drop that pistol." For an instant he thought of taking a chance. But she was safe behind her tree. She had him covered. The man dropped the revolver with an imprecation.

"Kick it from you."

He kicked it with the heel of his boot.

"Sit down on the ground—both of you," she ordered.

They sat down, cursing and grumbling. For fifteen minutes she held them there.

Purdy tried whining. "This ain't no way to treat an old friend, Kate. We ain't aiming to do you any harm. I always did think a heap of you."

"You may forget that stuff. I never was your friend, you barroom loafer. No, sit still!"

Behind the drifting cloud the moon went into partial eclipse. Bill crept into the brush and was gone before Kate knew it. When the cloud had passed she missed him and knew that he was crawling round to outflank her.

"Tom!" she cried in terror. And again, "Help, Tom!"

There was the sound of something crashing through the bushes, a surprised exclamation and an agitation in the underbrush.

Purdy rose, as if to go to his comrade's assistance.

"Sit down," Kate cried tensely.

Purdy looked at her standing white and resolute in the moonlight, her rifle pointed toward him. He sat down.

From out of the bushes came two men. The one in front was Bill. His face was bleeding and swollen. Behind him walked Tom carrying a rifle. "Hands up till I've looked you both

over," Tom ordered.

Four hands waved skyward, disarmed Bill and gathered in forward, very much frightened that the danger was over, saying anything more definite piteous little "Oh, Tom."

Lynch made his prisoners and hitch the team after they packed the wagon under his hand. This time he did not turn the wagon without punishment. Under drove them to the river bank, other hand was a coil of rope. "You're too hot-headed, both. What you need is to get on Jump."

"Jump where?" Lynch said.

"Right before you. Into the And keep going till you reach er bank—or the bottom."

"Lodderlight, man I say!" Purdy pleaded.

"Too bad you never learned. They jumped, bounded over or two into the deep pool and turned to persuade Tom to let them off."

"You wouldn't drive me out?"

"It's up to you. Sink or swim, please, but keep your gun clean. A bullet splashed into the water between them. They agreed to no longer. It was a shot and Tom, watching them, nearly reached the other bank, ready to throw a rope in rescue. The dropping in the shallow water the other side, they shook their heads and cursed rascally."

Tom turned on his heel and risive laugh. As the wagon back into the road they could see the impotent threats of the robbers.

All night they traveled. To his wife a bed in the wagon, quite sure her nerves were shaken for her to sleep, but her eyes closed to the rocking wagon. When they awoke, it was early day. She pulled the curtains to see Tom making fast. Before her lay Purdy, in the morning sun.

The wagon and team were a day at auction, but the wife was not included. It had been led to pieces and the saddle transferred to a handbag.

"If you ever go out to Tom that land of perennial snow, may see the gold from the steel transmuted into gold, hanging by hundreds from the trees. Tom will probably be grove of California, victims introduced are made victims

The Heart Of Ada

By Enos Emory



"I'm glad we came this way," thought Ada Royala as the big touring car bowed along the road. "It's really the best way to come—the shortest and the easiest. These new state roads are opening up such a lot of

liberty scarcely traversable country. But how strange it seems to be spinning along in the car where I once walked or drove old Calico! It is twenty-five years since Robert took me away. I've had such a good time, too. And I've never been back. I've never wanted to come back. I wouldn't be here now only it's the short cut to where Robert is waiting. Yet now that I'm here I would like to get a glimpse of Letty Lincoln. Dear me, what are you turning into this lane for, Louis?"

The calm chauffeur answered patiently.

"It cuts off a three mile bend in the road, madam. The old man of whom I got the last directions told me to come this way."

Ada Royala looked a little wild. "Dear

me," she thought, "this lane goes right by the house. I shall see it again and perhaps get a glimpse of Letty, too. But we'll be going so fast she'll never recognize me."

She felt excited anticipation. The car mounted a steep little hill and coasted down beautifully to a level stretch between stone walls, back of which ancient maples grew. A half mile ahead stood a decaying gray farmhouse, with ruinous outbuildings. A couple of cows and an old bay horse, hobbled by the halter strap tied to his knee, were grazing in the bitter field. A few chickens that were taking dust baths in the road fluttered to safety. A great black-and-buff dog bounded toward them down the road barking. As Ada leaned forward watching the car gave a jolt and the corner where she was sitting dropped perceptibly. She was not alarmed. The big automobile stopped at once.

"What's the matter, Louis?"

"Wheel off," replied the chauffeur. He had ceased to be calm.

Ada looked back. The wheel lay on the bank; the tire was a long way from it. Such a disaster meant a long de-

lay. And to think that it should happen just here of all places!

Ada opened the door and stepped out. Louis had gone after the scattered gear. She glanced at her trim, slim figure as he hunted a missing nut through the white dust. He was better alone. As for herself—she bit her lip in reflection. There seemed to be nobody at home yonder. Saturdays twenty years before had been market days always. Letty doubtless had gone to town. She felt a curious inclination to climb the ruinous stone steps into the yard and look about. Why not? Had she not once belonged there as much as Letty herself?

The dog had gone back to the wall before the house and stood alert, sentinelwise. She was not afraid of dogs, and anyway this dog didn't look hostile. She spoke to him as she went up the steps, but though he observed her carefully, he did not approach. A moment later she quite forgot him in looking about her. The yard was uncared for, except that the lilac tree was stockier and the rose bushes a bit more angled. She sought for pauses among the strewn leaves with her daintily gloved fingers and, finding a

few, plucked them and fastened them to her motoring coat. Then, still feeling the sense of the house's unoccupancy, she sat down on the steps and began to think about her own girlhood and Letty Lincoln's.

They had been cousins and they had lived together in this house with their aunt, who had made a home for them when their own mothers died. She had been kind to them, but her health soon failed and the doctor took the money that otherwise might have gone to making them all comfortable. Letty was twenty, and Ada was eighteen. They worked hard. Ada was always discontented. Letty, however, bore everything with constant patience. She was pretty in a quiet colorless way—

prettier even than Ada, although Ada had more spirit and glow. And when Robert Royala came visiting at the old farm that college vacation he had cared much for Letty. Letty had cared for him, but when that second summer he came back and asked her to marry him she refused.

"I can't leave Aunt Martha and Uncle Joe," she had said. "My duty is here. Ada wants to go away, and what would they do without both of us?"

She wavered between a decision to go to some sanitarium, permitting her friends to regard the matter as the vagary of a fractured mind and a desire to fly some distant region, after writing to each and every donor to come and take their portable property back, when the maid announced a visitor.

"I trust it isn't a policeman," she murmured. "I suppose," and here she gave the immense collection a comprehensive glance. "I've been getting goods under false pretence, just as much as any other delinquent of society."

But the tall, dignified man who entered was plainly not an officer of the law.

Ada knew what had happened, but when Robert turned to her she was ready. He was a way out. She thought that Letty was a fool. So it was that Ada, instead of Letty, married Robert. He took Ada away, and they never came back. She had never wanted to come back; she had been too busy spending the money Robert made for her. But now that she was here of no design—

There was a rustling of the leaves and as Ada glanced up she saw a woman standing at the corner of the house—a slender, pale woman, with gray hair close to her wonderful, deep eyes. They studied each other a moment.

"This is Letty, isn't it?" Ada said.

"You can't be Ada!"

They shook hands. "I saw the accident to the car. I didn't know that it was yours," Letty said. "Won't you come in?"

Ada went in. "It's all just the same," she sighed.

"Oh, yes. I'm very fond of leaving things just as they were."

"You live here alone now?"

"With Uncle Joe. He has gone to town today."

"How is he?"

"He has not been just the same since Aunt Martha died."

"You have changed some, Letty."

"Why not? I am forty-five years old."

There was an agitated silence. "I suppose I have changed, too," Ada sighed. "Twenty-five years is a long time."

"Quite a long time," agreed Letty, gently.

"And—and you have lived here all ways? You've never been away? Oh, Letty, you can't say you've been happy! You can't say you haven't wished—"

"I have been content," said Letty.

Ada looked at her steadily. "Yes, I can see in your face that you have been. You have that look. But I'm afraid I haven't been," she laughed. "I've hurried on so always. Do you remember, Letty, that day we went after pinxters? The woods seemed full of them, but you gathered the first you came to and kept them all the way. But I went on and on."

I had to deliver them myself."

"All these years you have kept them," murmured Annette.

"Yes, and would until my death," he answered, "but as you are to be married so soon, I felt I had no longer any right to them."

To his confused amazement the usually self-sufficient Annette burst suddenly into tears. In answer to his agitated inquiries, her burdened mind released its secret and, amid sobs, she told him the truth. At first he sympathized; but, some sense of humor coming to his aid, he fell into a fit of unaccountable laughter that aroused Annette from tears to irritation.

"Annette," he said at last, his shoulders still shaking. "It was just like

way to set everything right the years we have wasted, our foolish pride has led us to be wise for what time we leave us. Let us travel together to come, be they ten years or more."

"Never mind the name," "mine will do. It's a woman's name," he smiled.

Annette looked at the girl's letters written in the youth and of the love that had made of life a solitary, and pointing journey, and from which she had parted, she held out her

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An Accepted Hand

By Will Seaton



"NOTHER," muttered Annette, with an inextinguishable smile. "Let's see. I must have spent a small fortune on wedding presents, and, as far as I can see, it's likely to be all out-gone and no income, until the end of the game."

She let the wedding announcement which had called forth this soliloquy, fall unheeded to the floor, as she gave herself up to thoughts of the past and present. The tragic protest in Annette's eyes means more than mere irritation at a ceaseless sloughing

voiced. Was there nothing more in life, then, than an eternal reaching for something intangible, inexplicable, elusive? Annette felt, at times, like some imprisoned soul that, behind invisible bars, watches the freer spirits mating, loving, fulfilling life's demands and desires.

Then the mood passed. Recklessness, the mask that alone made life even tolerable, came to her aid.

A wild idea dashed through her disturbed mind.

"I've half a mind," she thought, "to do it. It will make the time pass more swiftly, and life has resolved itself into that attitude, nowadays. Yes, I'm going to."

Annette Sutherland had always been

happily that had been the reason—but that episode is really another story. "A creature of impulse," so her friends said, and therefore they should not have been so surprised as they were, when, a fortnight later, they received announcements in the most approved style, giving the unexpected news of their old friend's speedy marriage to Lawrence Randall Ellsworth, "whoever under the sun he can be," as went the comments of her mystified circle of intimates.

"I surely have danced to a lively tune," she said, one evening as she viewed, ruefully, the accumulations of silver, pictures, statuary and other paraphernalia of wedding trumpery, "but I rather guess the time is near when

she wavered between a decision to go to some sanitarium, permitting her friends to regard the matter as the vagary of a fractured mind and a desire to fly some distant region, after writing to each and every donor to come and take their portable property back, when the maid announced a visitor.

"I trust it isn't a policeman," she murmured. "I suppose," and here she gave the immense collection a comprehensive glance. "I've been getting goods under false pretence, just as much as any other delinquent of society."

But the tall, dignified man who entered was plainly not an officer of the law.

Annette gasped as she saw him, and

amused, half scared look at her wedding presents.

"Why, Arthur Adams," she exclaimed, "and what wind blew you hither, after so many silent years?"

"I heard you were soon to be married, Annette," he said, very quietly, "and I felt that before the event came to pass I'd like," he hesitated, "to see you as Anette Sutherland just once more."

Annette blushed. For once her ready wit failed her. She looked guiltily at the piles of gifts, and was silent.

"I've brought you my gift," he continued, and with some agitation, handed her a package of letters.

"I couldn't keep them," he said,

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